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**CERTAIN PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE PRE-
PARATION FOR UNDERGROUND WORK.**

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Paragraph 17 of the resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International "on the role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution," written, as is known, by Lenin as early as 1920, reads as follows:

"In the countries where the bourgeoisie or counter-revolutionary social democracy are still in power, the communist party should learn to connect its legal and illegal work systematically, placing the legal work under the actual control of the illegal party."

The third condition of acceptance into the Communist International approved by the same Second Congress of the Communist International, also edited by Comrade Lenin, states that all communist parties

"shall be charged with the duty of creating everywhere a parallel illegal organization which at the decisive moment might help the Party to perform its duty to the revolution."

In all countries where the communists are unable, as a result of military law or extraordinary laws, to conduct their entire work in a legal manner, it is absolutely imperative to combine legal with illegal methods. Finally, the fourth condition for acceptance into the Communist International establishes for all communist parties

"the necessity of persistent systematic propaganda among the troops. In localities where agitation is prohibited by extraordinary laws, it should be conducted in an illegal manner. A refusal to perform such work is equivalent to betraying [one's] revolutionary duty and is incompatible with membership into the Third International."

The important instructions of the Second Congress, issued in 1920, have had very little effect up to the present time on the practical activity and even in the

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Translator's note.

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press of the European communist parties, notwithstanding the fact that over 10 years have passed since their issuance. The under-evaluation of the great significance of these instructions is one of the worst remnants of the social democratic past of the Communist parties and is a right wing deviation leading to grievous consequences. The European communist parties (particularly parties such as the Communist Party of France and Czechoslovakia) have already paid a high price for their legalist tendencies. The results of legalist traditions have been especially grievous in the sphere of the factory and plant work of the communist party and in the sphere of activities in the army. The factory and plant and the army nuclei must inevitably be set up, under all democratic systems of government, as strictly illegal organizations but this signifies that it is necessary for both kinds of cells to maintain secret connections with the Party leadership. It is therefore the duty for leading personnel of the Party to maintain an illegal simultaneously with a legal organization.

The entire present international environment imperatively requires the communist parties of the principal capitalist countries to effect a radical change of the forms and methods of their Party work. The process of development of the economic crisis compels the bourgeoisie to increase its pressure upon the labor class and the other toiling strata of the population in order to shift the burdens of the crisis to a still greater extent on to the shoulders of the toilers. This economic crisis which intensifies the conflicts of interest between individual imperialistic powers and between the bourgeoisie of all countries and the U.S.S.R. to a degree never witnessed before, has resulted in the capitalistic world beginning to "crawl" into a new zone of imperialistic wars. The characteristic feature of the present moment is a transition, which has begun even now, of the ruling classes in the principal capitalistic countries to new more intensified forms of an offensive against the toiling class and its communist vanguard. This intensification of the class struggle is absolutely inevitable, otherwise the ruling classes will not be able to carry out further measures to shift the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the toilers or to give full swing to imperialistic wars. An analysis of the present tactics of class struggle as applied by the ruling classes of countries such as Germany, and Czechoslovakia, show very vividly the direction in which the communist parties should reorganize their methods and forms of Party work. The bourgeoisie naturally directs its blows against the communist parties since they are the principal enemy. Communist parties alone expose bourgeois apologetics entirely, in all their forms and variations; communist parties alone carry on to the end a systematic and irreconcilable policy directed towards the overthrow of the class rule of the bourgeoisie.

The struggle against the communist parties which is now being carried on in Germany and Czechoslovakia has a number of peculiarities which, it is to be regretted, our

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parties do not always take into consideration. The repressions used with regard to the communist parties of Germany and Czechoslovakia are increasing literally every day, and have been increasing particularly during the last few months. Several times a situation has arisen where the threat of the arrest and disbandment of the communist party was a direct danger. However, this did not take place. In Germany and Czechoslovakia the blows of oppression were not aimed directly at the communist party, but were dealt to the various mass organizations which play the part of driving belts connecting the communist parties of these countries with the masses (the Communist Union of Youth, the M.O.P.R. [International Red Aid], the MEZHRABPOM [International Workers Relief], the red labor unions in Czechoslovakia, the organizations of freethinkers, the revolutionary sport organizations, the Communist Union of Youth, and the ROTE FAHNE in Germany), while the communist parties remained legal for the time being. In Germany, the authorities went still further: leaving the Communist Party of Germany in its legal position, they seized the premises of the Central Committee of the party and confiscated the printing office where the ROTE FAHNE was published without prohibiting that paper. The significance of such tactics is plainly apparent: they put the Party off its guard, weaken the party's link with the masses, and as a result facilitate the future prohibition of the party and its complete destruction.

1. How should our communist parties act with regard to such tactics on the part of the ruling classes? An adequate illegal organization should be prepared in advance, but simultaneously the Party should consider that disputing every inch of ground in the field of legal possibilities and every form of open connection between the Party and the masses as its most important task. At the present time the ruling classes of Germany probably wish very sincerely that the Communist Party of Germany abandon the use of legal opportunities, but the Communist Party of Germany, on the contrary, notwithstanding increasing repressions, should conduct nine-tenths of its work in the open without waiting for the permission of the police or court officials, should openly rest for support on the masses, on the revolutionary mass organizations, and on the groups in the mass organizations of the enemy (primarily on the groups existing in the reformist labor unions). In order to follow such a line of policy the Parties should organize the most resolute opposition to all attempts to prohibit and disband the mass revolutionary organizations upon which the Communist parties rest for support. The German Communist Party and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia proved unprepared in this respect until quite recently. The opportunistic policy of the faction of the executive committee of the Freethinkers, which submitted without any opposition to the police order of dissolution, has been previously pointed out in the press of the Communist International. It stands to reason that not only the members of the group but also the Central Committee of the Party will be held responsible for this opportunism manifested by the faction

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of the Freethinkers' Executive Committee. The Central Committee should have known of the situation in the group and should have taken timely measures not to permit the shameful capitulation of the faction of the Freethinkers' Executive Committee. How should our parties react to the present tactics of the ruling classes?

2. The widest explanatory campaign should be arranged in the masses, the present aims of the bourgeoisie should be untiringly and repeatedly explained in the most popular form, all concrete facts showing the reactionary offensive against the revolutionary organizations of the labor class and peasantry should be put to use in this work of explanation, the explanatory campaign should be conducted hand in hand with the most stubborn and persistent work in mobilizing the masses in defense of those revolutionary organizations against which the attacks of the court and the police are directed.

3. The respective organs of Party leadership should immediately mobilize the groups in all revolutionary mass organizations so that the shameful affair of the German freethinkers may not be repeated. In particular, measures should be taken in advance so that the leading organs of the mass organizations should not submit to the orders of the authorities for their disbandment, i.e., that they might not dissolve themselves, might not surrender their accounts or turn over their files, funds, etc.

The reason why persistent struggle for the existence of legal mass organizations, particularly red labor unions, is necessary, is plain without special explanations; it is a struggle against blows directly aimed at the Party and secondly, the revolutionary mass organizations are the principal driving belts between the Party and the masses.

The police and the court, having resolved to close revolutionary mass organizations, will naturally use the whole state organization for the purpose of putting these decisions into effect. All those attacks of the ruling classes can be resisted by a powerful mass movement of protest, but the worst should be foreseen, i.e., that this will meet with failure.

4. In that case the documents, funds, and the principal leading personnel of the organization in the center and in the districts are to be transferred underground where they will continue their former work, using for that purpose all the possible legal and semi-legal covers. In order to provide for the worst, it is absolutely necessary for the communist parties immediately to develop the maximum of intensive work in all the mass organizations of the enemy (this is particularly important within the reformist unions). This work has also been absolutely indispensable in the past since in hostile organizations (particularly in the reformist labor unions) there is a

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large number of workmen who are "conscientious" reformists and social democratic proletarians; without winning them over to the side of the revolution in countries such as Germany and Czechoslovakia the winning over of the majority of the labor class is impossible. But intensive work in the mass proletarian and peasant organizations which are under enemy influence is also necessary now because, if the revolutionary mass organizations are closed the reformist labor unions and other analogous mass organizations will become the fundamental base for the mass activity of the communist party, and therefore the maximum intensification of the work of the communist party in reformist, fascist, and other legal organizations of the mass of the workers and peasants is one of the principal bases for correctly preparing for underground work. While underground the Communist parties should retain powerful legal and semi-legal points of support in the form of revolutionary mass organizations, labor union, sport, cooperative, cultural-educational, and similar organizations, as well as in the form of strong fractions and revolutionary opposition groups within the mass organizations controlled by the enemy.

5. The communist parties need have no fear of [going] underground if they develop extensive initiative in the creation of a number of local, rayon, and plant organizations, sport, cooperative, and cultural-educational organizations created without asking for sanction ("yavochnym poryadkom"), organizations of the type of plant mutual aid savings-banks, legal aid, etc., (each one of these organizations should have a solid communist revolutionary kernel), and if they rest for support on that network (it should be as extensive as possible) of legal and semi-legal mass organizations.

Using in the broadest manner possible all legal and semi-legal opportunities the communist parties, such as the German Communist Party, should not for a moment lose sight of the danger of being prohibited or being subjected to persecution for revolutionary party work even before the prohibition of the party which is always threatening them. That is why even now legal and semi-legal work should be linked with illegal work, even now it is necessary to change the structure of party organizations and the methods of party work so that all the principal organs of Party management [could] go underground and have all the mass activities of the party performed by means of the driving belts of legal and semi-legal mass organizations. As long as the party continues to remain legal, the Party committees should retain a certain small legal section of the administration, with regular local committees, with signs, open addresses in all directories, etc. Special comrades (from among Party members known to the police) should be detailed for work in the legal

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section of the party committees. Subsequently the regrouping of Party forces should be conducted in such a manner as to group Party active workers who are known to the police in the existing legal and semi-legal mass organizations. In general, the whole principal bulk of Party activists should be transferred at the present time to direct work in the mass organizations (both those which are under the influence of the communist parties and those which are in the hands of the opponents of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat). This is necessary first of all because this is precisely the spot where the most cruel battle of the immediate future, waged by the ruling classes, should be expected. That is why, for example, the problem of creating strong groups within the mass organizations is now becoming a problem of primary importance for the European communist parties. The matter of the groups in the mass organizations of all European parties has been absolutely unsatisfactory to date. Now this question has been put bluntly: strong groups in the mass organizations are to be created within the shortest time. The party leadership organs of the central committee must above all devote the most earnest attention to that field of party organization.

The Party management must itself be reduced in number and must be reorganized. In the beginning of this year the Communist International advised the communist parties of England and the United States to abolish the sections in the party committees. At that time this instruction was directed against the over-extension of the Party management in the communist parties of these countries. At the present time it would seem advisable to extend this instruction of the Communist International to a number of other countries also, primarily to countries such as Germany and Czechoslovakia. Party committees in the capacity of collective elected organs of party leadership remain during the intervals between congresses and conferences. It is necessary to think of reducing the number of members on the party committees in order to make the latter less cumbersome and more adapted to rapid assembly under conditions of serious police repression. Otherwise the party committees will not actually perform any work, will be replaced by a bureau or even a secretary, whereas now, just when the parties are confronted with serious trials, collective labor by the organs of party leadership is particularly important and necessary. The collective work within the party committees should go hand in hand with the most precise division of labor and with strict personal responsibility of every member of the party committee for the section of party work which has been entrusted to him. For our own part, we would suggest the following sample plan of division of labor within the Party committee:

- 1) The secretary organizes liaison with superior and subordinate Party organizations; he also prepares the meetings of the Party committee and of its bureau, and is held responsible for the execution of the resolutions of the Party committee and of the superior Party organs. It would be desirable that precisely the secretary of the Party committee effect the liaison with the Communist Union of Youth. The secretary has a small number of activists

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at his disposal who help him in the performance of his tasks (work in the legal section of the Party committee, search for suitable apartments, for addresses, safe-keeping of archives, etc.);

2) A person responsible for the publication of legal and illegal Party literature and for its distribution; has assistants for legal publications, for the supervision of illegal printing offices, for the organization of transport and for the distribution of literature. Every assistant in his turn arranges a group of special active workers to execute the tasks entrusted to him;

3) The cashier organizes the collection of membership fees and various financial enterprises of the Party (collections, the sale of literature, paying lectures, etc.). The cashier organizes his own group of activists. It is to be recommended in this connection that the membership fee collectors should simultaneously keep an actual account of the numerical changes in the Party organization, by keeping track of the adherence and resignation of Party members during the collection of membership fees, the conditions under which they occur, the nature of the persons leaving and joining, etc.;

4) A person responsible for the organization of Party education work, of schools, clubs, etc.;

5) In regions where garrisons are stationed, a person responsible for the work among soldiers and sailors with a special staff carefully isolated from the general party management;

6) A person responsible for the work of the Party in mass legal organizations, consequently also responsible for the organization of groups in the mass organizations;

7) Politically responsible editors of legal and illegal Party organs (they should be distinguished from the editors of legal Party publications responsible before the court and police authorities);

8) The secretary of the corresponding organization of the Communist Union of Youth.

Naturally this is only a sample plan which should be applied in accordance with the concrete conditions of the status and of the peculiar situation of each Party organization. The central salaried staff should be reduced as much as possible. The practice of having Party workers who are not employed on the Party staff execute Party tasks in the manner of regular Party commissions, or special tasks, should be applied as widely as possible. Particular attention should be devoted to the establishment by every party committee of well organized connections with the groups within the most important mass organizations and with the plant nuclei at large enterprises. While transferring the principal forces from among the party activists to work in mass organizations (first of all in the labor unions) it is imperative to instruct all of them

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to shift the center of gravity of their work to the enterprises by creating at such enterprises strong illegal cells supported by the broad non-party active workers organized into various legal and semi-legal mass organizations. For their own part the plant party cells must be directly connected with corresponding party committees and these connections should be established in accordance with all the rules for secret activities.

Work in legal and semi-legal mass organizations gives the necessary positive results if, in accordance with the general policy of the party, it is concentrated around the principal enterprises. This, in its turn, is possible only if the center of gravity of the work of these organizations is transferred to the enterprise and if they create at the enterprises a group of activists affiliated with the party and surrounding the plant party nucleus.

The reduction of the staff of party committees demands, on the other hand, the proper assignment of party activists, and the concentration of the best forces on the most important party work in the principal cells and in the groups of the chief mass organizations; it also requires the party committee to carry out, as need arises, a rapid regrouping of party activists, to create special commissions and brigades for the execution of individual concrete tasks, to charge instructors and special instructors with the execution of individual concrete tasks in verifying the execution of instructions issued by the Party leaders, etc., etc. Corresponding to the [demands of] present conditions, the structure of a Party organization should be as flexible as possible; it should be able to reconstruct itself rapidly, and every time action develops, measures should be taken to establish a correct combination of legal, semi-legal, and illegal Party methods so as not to permit the strongest blows of the class enemies to destroy (a) the plant cells, and (b) the leading nucleus of the Party committee.

Finally, the Party press is to play a most important role in the preparations for going underground. While defending its legal positions with particular persistence, the Party should defend its legal party press and should protest against every instance of confiscation and prohibition, using every "right" in its possession to issue another legal or at least semi-legal mass party organ within the shortest time possible after prohibition. Under those conditions it is necessary, by the way, to keep a careful watch over the form in which explanations concerning the policy and tasks of the Party are presented in the party newspapers; it is imperative to avoid formal grounds for police and court persecution; the HUMANITE, the central organ of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, publishes, for example, an extremely

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interesting soldiers' column, which is exceptionally important from the political point of view. This column, on the base of material from barrack life, mobilizes the soldier masses under Party slogans for struggle for their immediate demands. But in addition to factual documentary material, the column sometimes abuses individual officers, for which the editorial board of the HUMANITE is heavily fined. It is evident that the editorial board of the HUMANITE should avoid such a way of conducting the soldiers' column and should particularly take into consideration the fact that provocateurs are apparently interested in having the newspaper publish material for which it may be subjected to repression. The German police authorities confiscated the printing office in which the ROTE FAHNE used to be printed because that printing office had published an appeal for a general political strike. It stands to reason that the Central Committee of the German Communist Party should have foreseen the possibility of such repressions and therefore should not have printed the appeal in the printing office of the ROTE FAHNE. Several days later, however, the legal printing office of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party issued another document which also spoke of a general strike and on which the printing office where it had been printed was indicated in full.

At the same time:

1) Watchfulness over the contents of the Party press in general should be increased since underground the press is the principal means which may be used for full explanation of the Party policy and its concrete tasks to the broad masses; and

2) The maximum of attention should be devoted to distributing organs of the party press, and a distributing staff should be set up supported by the cooperation groups at the plants, in the villages, in the mass organizations, etc.

The ruling classes do all within their power to drive the legal communist parties underground and to crush them there. The communist parties should accept the challenge and should show that they can link themselves with the masses even when underground and that supported by the masses, they will overcome all obstacles.